



J. KENNETH BLACKWELL
Ohio Secretary of State

180 E. Broad Street, 16th Floor, Columbus OH 43215
614.466.2655 / Toll Free: 877.767.6446 / Fax: 614.644.0649
e-mail: blackwell@sos.state.oh.us
www.state.oh.us/sos/

December 14, 2004

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
The Honorable Linda T. Sanchez
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
The Honorable Melvin L. Watt

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
The Honorable Maxine Waters
The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6216

Dear Representatives:

Thank you for your letter concerning the November 2004 Presidential election in the state of Ohio. Ohio election officials have succeeded in performing their duties with diligence and attention to detail in one of the most closely watched elections in history. We were prepared for the challenge and have followed Ohio statutes and Constitution as they apply to the election requirements in this state.

As Secretary of State and Chief Elections Officer for Ohio, I have directed my staff to respond to inquiries from the Government Accountability Office and the U. S. Department of Justice, both of which have been authorized by Congress to assess any alleged violations of the "Help America Vote Act" (hereinafter HAVA) in any state or jurisdiction. Since these entities have the authority and jurisdiction to respond to matters that relate to enforcement of HAVA, my office will work with them in order to assist in the assessment of any matters, which may be of concern from both the state and federal levels for compliance with applicable laws.

In general, I have the utmost confidence in the integrity of the bipartisan elections officials in Ohio. We are resolved to bring to light any issues of substance that may be necessary to investigate through the officials designated with this responsibility. We are ready to eliminate the myths that may be circulating of unfair or discriminatory treatment of qualified Ohio electors at the polls.

My office will scrupulously review and assist in any matters referred to us by the Government Accountability Office or the Department of Justice in relation to Ohio election activities. I appreciate the concerns raised by some members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary and the interest in reviewing election issues raised at the state level. However, I strongly believe that Congress has already designated the Government Accountability Office and the Department of Justice to review election activities and empowered them with the authority to thoroughly investigate any matters brought forward by Ohio citizens. My office continues to be available to participate as needed in that process.

Thank you again for your letter and I urge you as well to participate as necessary in any efforts directed to your committee by the Department of Justice or the Government Accountability Office, as authorized by Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Kenneth Blackwell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

J. Kenneth Blackwell